



United Way
of Central Maryland

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United Way of Central Maryland Announces Additional Strategic Targeted Eviction Prevention Funding to Help Residents in Baltimore City and Baltimore, Harford and Howard Counties

\$43 million in funding to be distributed over the course of 15 months

June 29, 2021 – As the national CDC moratorium on evictions is set to expire this month, and Maryland's this August, one in five Marylanders are currently behind on rent. In response to this unprecedented crisis, [United Way of Central Maryland](#) will expand the Strategic Targeted Eviction Prevention (STEP) Program to serve residents in Baltimore City as well as Baltimore, Harford, and Howard Counties. Developed through [a partnership](#) between United Way of Central Maryland and Baltimore County in late 2020 and early 2021, the first-of-its-kind effort in Maryland has already provided more than \$4 million to support residents on the brink of homelessness.

With \$43 million from the federal Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP), United Way of Central Maryland will work with county and city governments and landlords to pay up to 12 months of back rent for qualified residents. This expanded program is estimated to help approximately 3,100 additional households avoid eviction and potential homelessness – a key focus of United Way's work to help people struggling to make ends meet in our region.

"Our recent COVID-19 Impact Survey showed that one of the top concerns for Maryland residents throughout the pandemic was housing," said Franklyn Baker, President and CEO, United Way of Central Maryland. "As we continue to address the needs of those affected most by this pandemic, stable, secure housing is one of our top focus areas. January's efforts through our Strategic Targeted Eviction Program directly, and quickly, addressed this need for approximately 935 households, and we are pleased to expand this critical initiative to Baltimore City and the surrounding counties to keep people in their homes as our region works to recover and rebuild."

Funded through a combination of federal, state and local dollars, this expanded STEP program will bundle large numbers of past-due accounts to prevent evictions in bulk. Rather than requiring tenants to apply individually, the program works directly with landlords and property managers to pay off delinquent accounts. In order to participate, landlords agreed to waive all

fees and costs, dismiss already filed eviction complaints, and not evict tenants for up to 90 days after the account had been settled. Designed to maximize impact, the program uses a data-driven model to focus on communities facing structural poverty and those with the highest rates of housing instability and COVID cases.

"We're thrilled that the innovative, data-driven eviction prevention model developed by Baltimore County and United Way of Central Maryland is being replicated across our state so that even more families can get the support they need," said Baltimore County Executive Johnny Olszewski. "We remain grateful for our partnership with the United Way, which allows us to further promote housing stability as we continue our recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic."

"We are extremely proud of what we were able to accomplish in January," added Dr. Scott Gottbreht, Associate Vice President of Homeless Services, United Way of Central Maryland. "'STEP 2.0' will be a great example of our ability to scale successful programs with additional funding. In this round, we will be able to prevent approximately 3,100 household evictions across Greater Baltimore. We were also able to include a clause that would prevent landlords from evicting tenants within 90 days of receiving these funds, which was previously a concern."

Along with this expanded rollout of the STEP program, United Way of Central Maryland and its partners will also be able to pay past-due utilities that are owed to landlords, such as electric, water, sewer, and trash, as well as provide up to three months of future rent for qualified tenants. This addition to the program addresses the need to keep tenants housed as they get back on their feet. The organization estimates households will qualify for approximately \$13,500 in aid. The first iteration of the program provided on average \$4,300 per household.

"Lack of access to safe, affordable housing has historically been the reality for too many Baltimore families. The pandemic magnified this reality, forcing us to build out a multi-faceted response that includes the support and engagement of community-based organizations," said Tisha Edwards, Executive Director of the Mayor's Office of Children & Family Success, which is administering Baltimore City's Eviction Prevention Program through its Baltimore City Community Action Partnership (CAP) centers. "The United Way STEP Program is core to our efforts to expand our ability to meet the increasing need of families that are at risk of eviction."

"Howard County has invested more than \$6 million to keep our residents safely housed throughout this pandemic, but there are still many of our neighbors struggling," said Howard County Executive Calvin Ball. "As we continue on the road to recovery, we must stay focused on ensuring that people in our community don't slip through the cracks. This investment of \$4.4 million in State funding for the STEP program could help an additional 450 residents stay in their homes as they continue to recover from the pandemic and return to work and school."

As one of the largest non-profit funders of eviction prevention in the state of Maryland, United Way of Central Maryland currently funds and operates a 14-site eviction prevention Family Stability Program, which provides \$1.2 million in eviction prevention funding annually. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, United Way has helped prevent evictions through the STEP pilot program, as well as its Family Stability, 211 Emergency Assistance, and Relocation (Baltimore City) programs.

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